

PHYSICAL ORGANIZATION
Considerations for Individuals with High Functioning Autism

Students with high functioning autism often benefit from physical structure to help to improve their overall level of organization as well as encourage their best understanding and independence. A few general considerations regarding physical structure for a student with high functioning autism are listed below.

1. Where is the student going to sit?
2. Where will the student store his/her materials? Would they be more independent/organized if they had additional space beside their desk? How will the materials be physically organized (hanging file folder, extra shelf, small portable drawers, special notebook)?
3. Would the student be more independent if given special consideration for locker location?
4. Are areas clearly labeled / designated for student's belongings?
5. Does the student need physical barriers/boundaries to reduce auditory and visual distractions?
6. Does the student need an independent work area for certain activities/times of the day?
7. Does the student need a quiet area set up outside of the classroom?
8. Does the student carry their schedule with them or is it kept in a transition area?
9. Is there a need for physical structure in areas outside of the classroom? Does the student require physical structure during transitions that involve waiting, lining up, or walking in the hallway? (For example, would it be helpful for them to be seated while waiting for certain activities or leave the classroom a few minutes early in order to more easily move through the hallways to their next class)?
10. Have special considerations been made in the area of physical structure to address needs in those more open, stimulating, and often less structured environments such as the cafeteria, gym, playground, or auditorium? (For example, choosing an area to sit in the cafeteria that is a bit less noisy or considering setting up a lunch-time with a small group of students in a less stimulating environment).
11. Is there any need for additional physical structure on the bus (assigned seating)?
12. Is there need for pre-planning needs in the area of physical structure for non-routine events such as a field trip or fire drill? (For example, choosing a particular landmark to stand or sit near during a fire drill).
13. Have you talked with your student about his/her needs and preferences?
14. Does the student know the layout of the large school environment. Would a map be helpful? Color coding?